

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ZAGREB 00829 270732Z

11

ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 829

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, YO, US

SUBJECT: SLOVENIAN OFFICIALS COMMENT ON CURRENT US-YUGOSLAV
TOPICS

1. WHILE IN LJUBLJANA SEPTEMBER 22 FOR THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE USIA "SHAKERS EXHIBIT," I MADE CALLS ON PRESIDENT OF THE SLOVENIAN ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS, EDO BRAJNIK, AND SLOVENIAN SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, MARJAN OSOLNIK. BOTH OF THEM BEMOANED THE CURRENT STATE OF US-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS, BUT EXPRESSED THE HOPE AND DESIRE FOR IMPROVEMENT AND CONTINUED BILATERAL COOPERATION.

2. AT BOTH MEETINGS, I TOOK THE INITIATIVE IN EXPRESSING OUR PERPLEXITY AND INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND: 1) WHY THE YUGOSLAVS HAD CHOSEN TO PROTEST IN WASHINGTON ABOUT THE TWA HIJACKING WHILE THE HIJACKING EPISODE WAS STILL IN PROGRESS; AND 2) WHY THE YUGOSLAVS HAD LAUNCHED A SUBSEQUENT CRITICAL PRESS CAMPAIGN ON THIS SUBJECT. I POINTED OUT THAT WE ALL REGRETTED THE DEATH OF AN INNOCENT POLICEMAN IN NEW YORK, BUT FORTUNATELY THE LIVES OF THE HOSTAGES ON THE PLANE WERE SAVED, THE CULPRITS WERE APPREHENDED, RETURNED TO THE US, AND THE JUDICIAL PROCESS WAS NOW AT WORK. BOTH BRAJNIK AND OSOLNIK RESPONDED LAMELY WITH THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ZAGREB 00829 270732Z

STANDARD LINE ABOUT PREVIOUS YUGOSLAV WARNINGS ABOUT THE

ACTIVITIES OF EXTREMIST GROUPS IN THE US AND CITED THE FAILURE OF THE US TO EXTRADITE THE WORLD WAR II USTASHI CRIMINAL, ARTUKOVIC. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY FORCEFUL IN MAKING THE POINT THAT YUGOSLAVS FIND IT INDEED STRANGE AND SUSPICIOUS THAT OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF DECADES, THE US POLICE FORCES HAVE FAILED TO APPREHEND ANYONE IN CONNECTION WITH THE BOMBINGS AND OTHER ACTS OF VIOLENCE COMMITTED AGAINST OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE US.

3. BRAJNIK (A FORMER HIGH-RANKING SECURITY OFFICIAL) AND OSOLNIK FLATLY DENIED THAT THE NOTORIOUS INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST CARLOS HAD BEEN IN YUGOSLAVIA. (NOTE: THEY, LIKE ALL OF THE YUGOSLAVS WITH WHOM I HAVE DISCUSSED THE PRESENCE OF CARLOS, FIND IN-COMPREHENSIBLE THE IDEA THAT CARLOS SHOULD HAVE BEEN KNOWINGLY PERMITTED BY THE YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES TO ENTER. ON THE OTHER HAND, YUGOSLAVS WOULD ALSO BE MOST DISTURBED TO LEARN THAT THEIR SECURITY FORCES WERE INEFFECTIVE IN DETECTING THE ENTRY OF SO PROMINENT A CRIMINAL AS CARLOS.)

4. BOTH BRAJNIK AND OSOLNIK RAISED THE TOTH CASE AND WERE CRITICAL OF THE PUBLICITY SURROUNDING THE CASE FOLLOWING AMBAS-SADOR SILBERMAN'S PUBLIC STATEMENT AFTER TOTH'S RELEASE. I POINTED OUT THAT FOR ALMOST ONE YEAR, THE EMBASSY HAD IN VAIN SOUGHT CONSULAR ACCESS AND THAT BOTH THE EMBASSY AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD, AGAIN IN VAIN, TRIED TO LEARN WHY TOTH HAD BEEN APPREHENDED AND CONVICTED. BRAJNIK AND OSOLNIK TOOK THE LINE THAT TOTH WAS A YUGOSLAV CITIZEN AND THAT IT WOULD BE A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT FOR THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT TO KEEP A FOREIGN GOVERN-MENT POSTED ON PROCEEDINGS AGAINST A YUGOSLAV CITIZEN. I NOTED, OF COURSE, THAT THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT HAD IN EFFECT RECOGNIZED THAT TOTH WAS NOT MERELY A YUGOSLAV CITIZEN BY HAVING ISSUED HIM A YUGOSLAV VISA IN HIS AMERICAN PASSPORT. BRAJNIK SUGGESTED THE DESIRABILITY OF WORKING OUT A BILATERAL AGREEMENT COVERING DUAL NATIONALS. I COMMENTED THAT OVER MANY YEARS THE US GOVERNMENT HAS CONVEYED ITS INTEREST IN CONCLUDING SUCH AN AGREEMENT AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT FRUITFUL ACTION MIGHT SOON BE TAKEN.

5. IN UNDERLINING YUGOSLAV'S LONG-TERM INTEREST IN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US, BRAJNIK CITED THE KRSKO NUCLEAR POWER PROJECT.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ZAGREB 00829 270732Z

HE SAID THAT THE SELECTION OF WESTINGHOUSE, THE AMERICAN CON-STRUCTION PARTNER, WAS A "POLITICAL DECISION" TAKEN AT THE HIGHEST YUGOSLAV LEVELS, EVEN THOUGH BETTER TERMS HAD BEEN OFFERED BY THIRD COUNTRY COMPETITORS. BOTH OSOLNIK AND BRAJNIK EARNESTLY INSISTED THAT YUGOSLAVIA WANTS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US AND HOPED THAT THE CURRENT UNHAPPY PHASE OF US-YUGOSLAVIA RELATIONS WOULD SOON BE OVERCOME. OSOLNIK EXPRESSED THE DESIRE FOR "MORE DIALOGUE" AT HIGH LEVELS.

6. OSOLNIK, IN REFERRING TO PRESSURES ON YUGOSLAVIA COMING FROM THE US AND USSR, GAVE TWO EXAMPLES OF SOVIET PRESSURE: SOVIET SUPPORT FOR BULGARIA ON THE MACEDONIAN ISSUE AND THE VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION LAST MONTH BY THREE TOP POLITICAL LEADERS FROM CARINTHIA, AUSTRIA, TO STUDY MINORITY QUESTIONS.

7. OSOLNIK SAID HE HAD RECEIVED REPORTS OF THE DEMARCHES I HAD MADE WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ZAGREB INTERNATIONAL FAIR CONCERNING THE ANTI-US PHOTOGRAPHS AND PAMPHLETS DISTRIBUTED AT THE NORTH KOREAN EXHIBIT. HE COMMENTED THAT THIS INCIDENT HAD PROVOKED PROBLEMS WITH THE NORTH KOREANS WHO COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY YUGOSLAVIA SHOULD HAVE COMPELLED THEM TO REMOVE THOSE MATERIALS IN LIGHT OF WHAT NORTH KOREANS CONSIDERED THEIR GOOD RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA AND INASMUCH AS BOTH COUNTRIES WERE "NON-ALIGNED." KAISER

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